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ABSTRACT

Child maltreatment, defined as acts of commission or omission that harm a child physically or psychologically, adversely affects millions of children nationwide. Since almost two-thirds of these children are of school age, schools could be among the best resources available to combat child maltreatment. This paper examines the responsibilities and policies of Indiana public schools regarding child maltreatment. Section I defines child maltreatment and reviews federal and Indiana laws and reporting requirements. Section II focuses on the ethical and professional responsibilities of educators. Section III presents the results of survey responses from 203 of the state's 304 school corporations to determine their policies and procedures for handling child maltreatment. In section IV, suggestions are offered to improve school policies and procedures that include inservice and preservice education, school policies to ensure accountability in abuse situations, coordination with community child services, state support for maltreatment programs, and standardized record-keeping practices. References and survey data are included. (LMS)

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CHILD MALTREATMENT: RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESPONSES OF THE SCHOOLS

Policy Issue Series No. 4 May 1988

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CHILD MALTREATMENT: RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESPONSES OF THE SCHOOLS

Policy Issue Series No. 4 May 1988

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Executive Summary

Child maltreatment--acts of commission or omission that harm a child physically or psychologically--adversely affects millions of children nationwide, with consequences that range from minor forms of maladjustment to serious emotional handicaps to death. In Indiana alone, some 30,000 children are abused each year. Since almost two thirds of these children are of school age, schools could be among the best resources available to combat child maltreatment. Unfortunately, many schools--both nationwide and in Indiana--fail to deal effectively with this problem.

This paper examines the responsibilities and policies of Indiana public schools regarding child maltreatment. Section I defines child maltreatment and reviews federal and Indiana laws and reporting requirements. The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, passed in 1974, kindled a national resolve to reduce child abuse. Since 1974 all 50 states have established their own laws for handling this problem. In Indiana, the law requires that "any individual who has reason to believe a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall make a report."

Section II focuses on the ethical and professional responsibilities of educators. By virtue of their position, school personnel have an even greater opportunity and obligation than other citizens to identify, report, and help reduce child maltreatment. But in general, the level of educators' participation and effectiveness has been somewhat disappointing--less than 15% of child maltreatment cases in Indiana are reported by school personnel (a figure comparable to national statistics).

And even though the "Family Violence and Victim Assistance Fund" earmarks approximately $140,000 per year to help school districts design prevention programs, relatively few corporations have taken advantage of this fund.

Section III presents the results of a survey of Indiana school policies and procedures for handling child maltreatment. The survey revealed that of the 304 school corporations in Indiana: (a) 106 corporations (35%) reported having written policies on child maltreatment, (b) 82 corporations (27%) reported offering inservice education on maltreatment issues to school staff members, and (c) 24 corporations (8%) reported some follow-up contact with the child and family. The survey also covered school corporations' methods of informing personnel and parents about state laws, procedures for reporting suspected cases, and written documentation of cases. In general, most corporations lack standardized systems for preparing staff to identify, report, and reduce maltreatment.

In Section IV, the authors offer the following suggestions for the improvement of school policies and procedures: (a) including a component on child abuse in preservice and inservice education programs, (b) developing school policies to ensure accountability in abuse situations and to help correct and prevent abuse, (c) coordinating efforts between schools and community child protection services, (d) encouraging state support for maltreatment programs, and (f) standardizing record-keeping practices.

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Foreword

This policy paper is based on the premise that schools and educators are among the best resources we have to combat child maltreatment. The purpose of this paper is to provide policymakers and educators with information about the current status of Indiana public school efforts to report, prevent, and correct the problem of maltreatment of children in the state. The following issues are discussed: (a) the nature of child maltreatment, (b) the potential for schools and educators to combat child maltreatment, (c) the manner in which school corporations are dealing with the issue, and (d) considerations for improving the effectiveness of schools and educators in combatting child maltreatment.

The term "child maltreatment," rather than "child abuse," is used throughout this report because it encompasses acts of both neglect and abuse. Also, "child maltreatment" more accurately reflects the total scope of a major problem that affects millions of children and families each year.

Section I

GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

The Nature of Child Maltreatment

Child maltreatment refers to the avoidable actions of adults that are or threaten to be physically or psychologically damaging to children under the age of eighteen. Child maltreatment acts may be:

- physical (e.g., assault with implement, failure to provide for minimum nutritional needs),
- psychological (e.g., verbal assault, close confinement), or
- sexual (e.g., molestation, incest, involvement in pornography).

While these definitional distinctions are made, the physical and psychological components of child maltreatment are often inextricably intertwined, with the exception of discrete occurrences of psychological maltreatment (e.g., verbal abuse, humiliation, unjust discrimination).

What motivates individuals to engage in child maltreatment has not been clearly delineated. Available research has identified the following conditions experienced by perpetrators as probable causes:

- unmet psychological needs,
- inadequate child development and parenting knowledge,
- inadequate coping strategies and skills,
- economic and social stress,

- inadequate social support network, and
- cultural approval of violence (Brassard, Germain, & Hart, 1987; Hyman, 1987; Smith, 1984).

Child maltreatment produces consequences ranging from minor forms of maladjustment to death. Sufficient evidence exists to suggest that a wide range of human suffering (e.g., maladjustment, violence, failure) may have its roots in child maltreatment acts that are intentionally or unintentionally perpetrated (Hart, Germain, & Brassard, 1987).

Law and Incidence: National and Indiana Perspectives

The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (1974) set the stage for practices intended to correct and reduce child maltreatment throughout the nation. The Act, in establishing the Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, provided states with information, resources, and technical assistance to help them plan, improve, and develop maltreatment programs for prevention, intervention, identification, and correction. Since passage of this Act, all 50 states have established their own laws and procedures for identifying, reporting, and handling child maltreatment cases. National statistics reflect a dramatic rise in the incidence of child maltreatment reports--from 416,000 reports in 1976 to nearly 2 million in 1985 (American Humane Association, 1987). The number of actual instances is probably well beyond the number of reports. Fifty to seventy percent of maltreated children are of school age (American Humane Association, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987).

Indiana's present laws regarding child maltreatment are found in Indiana Codes 3-6-4-3, 31-6-7-12, and 31-6-11-1 through 31-6-13-2. According to Indiana law, a maltreated child, labeled "Child in Need of Services," is someone under the age of 18 whose physical or mental condition is seriously impaired or endangered because of acts of omission or commission for which a caretaker is culpable. Indiana law dictates " . . . any individual who has reason to believe a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall make a report . . . " (IC 31-6-11-3). "Reason to believe" is defined as meaning "evidence which, if presented to individuals of similar background and training, would cause those individuals to believe that a child was abused or neglected" (IC 31-6-11-2). Those reporting are immune from civil or criminal liability unless acting in bad faith or with malicious intent. A person who knowingly fails to make a report commits a Class B misdemeanor carrying legal penalties of up to 180 days imprisonment and $1,000 in fines.

Statistics gathered by the Indiana Department of Public Welfare (1987) show that the number of maltreated children reported from 1980 to 1987 has risen from 23,503 to 29,344, in an uneven pattern. For example, 1985 and 1986 reports of maltreatment incidents were greater than 33,000, substantially above 1984, 1987, and all other reporting years. On the basis of statistics regarding substantiated and indicated child maltreatment, school-age children make up a minimum of 55-60% of the total maltreated child population in Indiana (Indiana Department of Public Welfare, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987).

Section II

SCHOOLS, EDUCATORS, AND MALTREATMENT

Expectations for Educators and Schools

Schools represent the only institutions in our society through which virtually all young people pass. Thus, educators are in a very good position to help identify school-age children who are being abused or neglected. Educators are knowledgeable about the physical, learning, emotional, and behavioral characteristics of children during the range of years they are in school. The education and experience of teachers allow them to make judgments regarding whether a child's characteristics are sufficiently different from peers or from the child's own previously displayed characteristics to suggest that maltreatment is occurring.

Educators have assumed the role of parent surrogates, responsible for the healthy development of the children in their charge. They are expected to establish conditions supporting the best interests of children and to protect them from conditions that would endanger their well-being. The ethical and professional standards for educators support these positions. Educators are expected to assume major responsibilities for identifying, reporting, and reducing child maltreatment (Broadhurst, 1984; Drews, 1972; Garbarino, 1979; Gil, 1969; Jones & Fox, 1979; Levin, 1983; Martin, 1973; National Education Association, 1982; National Parents and Teachers Association, 1985; Tower, 1984). Characteristics intrinsic to the very nature of the role of "teacher" fit these expectations:

- a deep commitment to children at a personal level (Broadhurst, 1984),
- concern for the well-being of the "whole child" (American Humane Association, 1971), and
- a desire to overcome conditions that limit or reduce learning (Broadhurst, 1984).

Conditions of Particular Relevance to Schooling

Student Learning and Child Maltreatment

Research on the effects of maltreatment on learning is in an early stage. Intellectual ability has been found to be 10 to 30 IQ points lower for maltreated children than for control groups of children during early childhood (Brassard, 1987). Teachers have consistently judged maltreated children to be less competent academically and socially, to have poorer work habits, and to be more likely to exhibit behavioral problems, than their nonmaltreated peers. Available evidence on basic educational skill development suggests that maltreated children are more likely to exhibit deficiencies, but the meager research in this area is inconclusive (Brassard, 1987).

Child Maltreatment and Special Populations

Children who have been identified by schools as handicapped are more likely to be at higher risk of maltreatment than the general population of children (Brassard, 1987; Broadhurst, 1986). One study of maltreated children found nearly half of them to have been retained or referred for special education services (see Brassard, 1987 and Brassard & Gelardo, 1987 for comprehensive coverage). The results of child maltreatment may be expressed in

emotional and behavioral problems leading to a diagnosis of "serious emotional handicap" (Hart, Germain, & Brassard, 1987). In such cases, the original and continuing major cause of the child's handicap may exist in out-of-school maltreatment conditions that would be most effectively handled through intervention jointly developed and pursued by the school corporation and the Child Protection Services (CPS). However, due to the lack of a clear definition of emotional maltreatment and the need to prove that the maltreatment has or will cause serious impairment to the child's life/health, CPS is presently hesitant to act in cases of emotional abuse and neglect where physical damage or danger to the victim is not clear (K. McDowell, Legal Counsel, Indiana Department of Education, personal communication, October 20, 1987; L. Arthur, CPS Consultant, Indiana Department of Public Welfare, personal communication, November 20, 1987). Due to this reluctance to intervene, and because the primary maltreatment experienced by handicapped children may be psychological, a substantial gap in service delivery may exist.

Among other special populations deserving consideration are children from language minority families and children of migrant workers. The language and culture differences and high mobility rates of these families tend to be in conflict with mainstream "American" society in ways that confound judgments about the existence of child maltreatment and limit attempts to be accurate, fair, and effective when assisting or intervening. Presently, inadequacies exist with regard to standards for educational and socio-cultural neglect and the type of resources necessary to

serve the best interests of these children when maltreatment is suspected. Having a bilingual and same-culture resource person available to assist minority children and families could increase communication and understanding of cultural differences, and increase the likelihood of successful intervention. (L. Caine-Fowler, Consultant, Division of Language Minority and Migrant Programs, Indiana Department of Education, personal communication, December 3, 1987).

Educational Neglect

Educational neglect is another form of child maltreatment that has been recognized by the Indiana Department of Public Welfare (L. Arthur, personal communication, February 23, 1988). This type of neglect--deprivation of education--is caused by parents who either encourage, or do little to discourage, their children's repeated absence from school. Such parental influences may be corruptive (e.g., encouraging truancy), exploitive (e.g., having the child work or baby sit for younger siblings), or simply neglectful (e.g., providing no guidance). Schools are expected to report cases of educational neglect to CPS when school efforts (e.g., notification, counseling) fail to correct the problem.

Approximately 6-7% of the suspected and substantiated cases of child neglect in Indiana fell into this category during 1986 and 1987. The relevance of educational neglect to schooling is obvious. However, determining the effectiveness of intervention efforts and defining the magnitude of educational neglect remain problematic due to the lack of coordination between schools and CPS on procedures to handle these types of cases.

Child Maltreatment by School Personnel

Child maltreatment perpetrated by school staff falls under the same laws as child maltreatment perpetrated by other adults (Corson & Davidson, 1987; Hart 1987; Melton & Corson, 1987). Maltreatment by school staff is a serious matter which school corporations appear to be ill-equipped to handle (Hart, Brassard, & Germain, 1987). Given educators' substantial responsibility to provide conditions supporting healthy development for all children, schools should be particularly eager to eliminate maltreatment within their walls.

Although child maltreatment by school staff is infrequent, it does occur. In Indiana, maltreatment by school personnel is reported, indicated, and substantiated at higher rates than in any other institutional setting (Indiana Department of Public Welfare, 1987). However, reporting levels are likely to be below occurrence levels because school corporations are reluctant to report these incidents even when strong evidence is present (Fuentes-Ruiz, 1987; Krugman & Krugman, 1984). Additionally, reporting in Indiana is not organized to reveal the child's grade level, the specific position of school personnel perpetrators, or the relationship of the perpetrator to the student. While child maltreatment by school staff is beginning to receive some attention nationally and in Indiana, further clarification regarding the type, seriousness, and frequency of actions that constitute maltreatment by school personnel is needed (Brassard, 1987; Hart, 1987; Hyman, Zelikoff, & Clarke, 1987; Lynch, 1987).

Performance of Schools and Educators in Reporting Incidents

Nationally, only about 13% to 14% of the total number of child maltreatment cases are reported by school personnel each year, even though nearly two thirds of the reported maltreatment cases involve school-age children (American Humane Association, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987; Broadhurst, 1986). The effectiveness of educators in dealing with this problem generally has been judged to be quite disappointing (Brenton, 1977; Broadhurst, 1984, 1986; Garbarino, 1979). The reasons given for this poor showing include the following:

- poor pre- and inservice preparation of educators resulting in a lack of confidence and competence in dealing with maltreatment issues,
- lack of existence, clarity, and/or communication of school policies,
- negative and obstructive tone set by administrators,
- reluctance to interfere in family privacy,
- frustration with inadequate case handling or lack of follow-through from community agencies,
- unclear definitions of child abuse and neglect, and
- fear of reprisals against the child (see Hart, Brassard, & Germain, 1987 for a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of educators in handling suspected child maltreatment).

Reporting by school personnel in Indiana during the last five years appears to be low, similar to that cited for reporting nationally. Indiana statistics for reporting by school personnel

are unclear because school reports are combined with reports from other "substitute caretakers" (e.g., baby sitters, day-care staff). Combined, these groups have accounted for approximately 8% to 14% of the cases reported in recent years (Indiana Department of Public Welfare, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987). Information is not available to clarify the manner or degree to which the nation's or Indiana's schools have dealt with responsibilities beyond reporting (e.g., helping victims and perpetrators, preventing future occurrences).

While more cases of neglect than abuse are reported to Indiana CPS each year (e.g., 19,286 [55%] to 15,489 [45%] cases in 1986), more cases of abuse than neglect are reported by school/substitute caretakers (e.g., 2,330 [6.7%] versus 1,808 [5.2%] of the total number of cases in 1986). Neglect appears to be more difficult for school staff to identify and/or to judge in regard to level of seriousness. This difficulty may be due, at least in part, to the influence of widely variant community standards for adequate child care (L. Arthur, CPS Consultant, Indiana Department of Public Welfare, personal communication, November, 1987).

Support for Maltreatment Intervention and Prevention Programs in Indiana

Child Maltreatment Reporting Law Requirements for Educators

Like other states, Indiana requires educators to report suspected cases of child maltreatment. According to the law, an immediate oral report must be made to the local CPS or to a law enforcement official. A teacher--or any other employee of a

school system--who has "reason to believe" that a child is being maltreated must immediately notify the individual in charge of the school (e.g., principal) or that individual's designee (e.g., assistant principal), who in turn is responsible for reporting the incident or causing a report to be made to the appropriate agency. The identifying staff member has a duty to contact CPS or law enforcement officials personally, unless assured that a report has been made by the person(s) to whom the incident was reported.

Existing Funds for Prevention Activities

In 1985, the Indiana legislature passed the Family Violence and Victim Assistance Fund, which established a process for the accumulation of monies through county fees (e.g., those paid for marriage licenses, marriage dissolutions, and prosecutor services). The fund is used for projects in three areas: (a) 55% of the money goes to prevent domestic violence, (b) 15% goes to child maltreatment prevention projects, and (c) 30% goes to victim and witness assistance projects. Indiana is one of 44 states that currently provide child maltreatment prevention funds (J. Scott, National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, personal communication, November 16, 1987). During the years the fund has been in existence, approximately $140,000 has been available annually for child maltreatment prevention programs. Funds accumulated through the first half of the 1987-88 budget year have been approximately 20% above the amount accumulated during the same period in previous years.

This fund provides support for school corporations, school-community coalitions, and other community service agencies to

design and implement prevention programs. However, relatively few school corporations have taken advantage of the program. All of the school projects funded so far have been theatrical presentations to children about sexual abuse. In some cases, these "awareness" programs include pre- and post-tests, follow-up discussions or other in-school extensions, and opportunities for inservice training for educators (for example, see Bridgework Theater, 1984). For the 1987-88 budget year, only the Gary Community Schools requested and received funding. School corporations are encouraged to submit proposals that are comprehensive in scope and that prepare one or more staff members to continue to expand prevention efforts beyond the grant period (Staff, Indiana Human Services Division, personal communication, November 16, 1987).

This fund provides genuine potential for reducing child maltreatment. Limitations on reaching that potential during the first years of the fund's existence have been associated with: (a) difficulty in predicting the amounts of money that would be available, due in part to the lateness with which some counties report and transfer funds to the state; (b) the relatively small amount of money available for child maltreatment prevention (for example, if divided equally, $140,000 would provide only $461 to each of Indiana's 304 school corporations); (c) the need for more extensive planning and encouragement for the development of programs; and (d) the limited scope of programs so far developed.

In addition to the Family Violence and Victim Assistance Fund, $20 million has been allocated by Indiana's General

Assembly for 1988-89 to establish programs that assist children who are at risk of dropping out of school. Although these programs are not directed specifically at children who are presently or potentially victims of maltreatment, available research and expert opinion suggest that these children would be represented at disproportionately high rates within the at-risk group (Brassard, 1987). Programs that have been developed to keep children in school also have the potential to reduce their vulnerability to maltreatment and reduce the power of its consequences (for information contact Marcella Taylor, Indiana Department of Education).

Child Welfare Programs

Child welfare programs, including those dealing with child maltreatment, shifted from a county system of control to an organization of services under state control as of September 1986. During the intervening period, Indiana Department of Welfare staff members have been working with county CPS officials to identify areas of need and potential and to create a coherent and dependable system of child maltreatment services. This period of reorganization has provided an opportunity for Indiana to upgrade its child maltreatment prevention and correction programs (L. Arthur, CPS consultant, Indiana Department of Public Welfare, personal communication, December 15, 1987). Additionally, strong interest has been expressed by representatives of concerned state agencies and organizations to coordinate efforts to combat child maltreatment at the state and local levels (M. Taylor, Department of Education, personal communication, November 20, 1987;

P. Eagan, Indiana Chapter for Prevention of Child Abuse, personal communication, November 20, 1987).

Section III

SURVEY OF INDIANA SCHOOL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Survey Procedures

Research studies and the opinions of experts, nationally and in Indiana, indicate that educators and schools are doing a relatively poor job of combatting child maltreatment, particularly when compared to their potential for providing assistance. To determine salient conditions associated with the involvement of Indiana's schools and educators in child maltreatment, a survey of the state's 304 school corporations was undertaken.

The survey was conducted by the Consortium on Educational Policy Studies, Indiana University, in three stages: (a) a request for copies of written policies (fall 1986), (b) a second request for written policies and for specific policy details from those corporations that had not responded to the first stage (spring 1987), and (c) a request for additional information from corporations that provided written policies in response to the first stage (fall 1987). School corporations were asked to supply information on the following:

- written policies and procedures for identifying and handling suspected cases of child maltreatment,
- means used to inform teachers, other school personnel, parents, and community members about school policies and procedures,

- means employed to inform teachers and other school personnel about state law and their rights and responsibilities under the law,
- inservice activities,
- procedures followed when a suspected case of child abuse/neglect is identified,
- follow-up procedures with the child and/or family, and
- written documents kept about the incident.

Survey Findings

Approximately two thirds (203) of the school corporations returned information about their policies; 101 of the 304 corporations did not respond to any part of the survey by November 1, 1987. The survey included a statement that failure to respond would be interpreted to mean the school corporation did not have a policy or procedure. To verify this assumption, a random sample (10%) of the nonrespondents was interviewed. Since 90% of those interviewed did not have written policies, it is fair to assume that most of the nonresponding school corporations do not have policies or procedures on child maltreatment for which they can be held accountable.[1] A summary of the survey results is provided below.

Existence of Written Policies and Procedures

Of Indiana's 304 school corporations, 106 (35%) indicated that they have written policies on child maltreatment, 97 (32%)

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[1]The hypothesis that nonrespondents did not have policies or procedures on child maltreatment prior to November 1, 1987 was tested at alpha = .05, and was not rejected.

indicated that they have some policies and procedures that are communicated orally, and 101 (33%) did not respond. Large school corporations in Indiana are much more likely to have written policies and procedures than are small school corporations, as has been found to be the case nationally (Jones & Fox, 1979; Levin, 1983). Seventy-three percent of the 30 largest school corporations indicated that they had written policies, whereas written policies were reported by only 47% of the smallest 30 school corporations.

The comprehensiveness of written policies and procedures provided by school corporations, when assessed as to dissemination strategies, follow-up procedures, and written documentation, ranged from high to low levels. About one third of the 106 corporations that returned written policies had clear procedures for reporting child maltreatment cases; however, only a few corporations had written statements that approached a high level of comprehensiveness.

Methods of Providing Information about School Corporation Policy

Findings dealing with the provision of information to school staff and community/parents are displayed in Table 1 (p. 18). In general, a minority of school corporations appears to have dependable procedures for providing basic information about school corporation policy on child maltreatment to those who would be affected by it.

Only 9% of the school corporations reported providing information about school policy through "occasional" inservice education, and less than 1% reported doing so on a "regular"

basis. The corporations that have a plan for reporting incidents of child maltreatment tend to rely on teachers to obtain the information from a school system publication (to which they may or may not have easy access) or to be present at staff meetings when information about child maltreatment is provided. Overall, nearly 7 out of 10 corporations either failed to respond or reported having no procedures for the provision of information to school staff. Less than one fifth of school corporations affirmed that they provide policy information to parents and other community representatives through meetings, school newsletters and manuals, or the community newspaper.

Table 1. Methods Used to Disseminate Information about School Corporation Policy

Method	GROUP			
	School Personnel		Community/ Parents	
Regular Inservice	2	(.7%)		
Occasional Inservice	26	(9%)		
Staff Meetings	49	(16%)		
School Policy Manual	33	(11%)	11	(4%)
Teacher Manual	9	(3%)		
Administrative Handbook	2	(.7%)		
Meetings			12	(4%)
Newspaper/Media			20	(7%)
Newsletters/Flyers			13	(4%)
None	102	(34%)	153	(50%)
No Response	101	(33%)	101	(33%)

Note. Responding corporations may have indicated that they use none, one, or multiple methods to disseminate policy information.

Even though school corporations were not specifically asked about their methods for notifying students, several corporations volunteered this information. Eleven of these corporations (4%)

use school policy manuals, 9 (3%) use student handbooks, 8 (3%) distribute newsletters, and 3 corporations (1%) integrate information on school policy directly into the curriculum. Most of the policy and procedure information received did not include consideration of the need for students to be informed.

Methods of Providing Information to Educators about Indiana Law

School corporations with an identifiable procedure provide information to educators regarding state law in the following ways (responses may fit into multiple categories):

- staff meetings--61 corporations (20%),
- inservice education--35 corporations (11%) (however, only 4 of these corporations require regularly scheduled inservice education),
- school bulletins--27 corporations (9%), and
- school policy manuals--22 corporations (7%).

A few corporations rely on some unidentified system of contact between school personnel and/or community agency representatives. However, more than 6 of 10 school corporations either failed to respond or reported having no established system to provide information to educators. It appears that most school staff in Indiana are not adequately prepared by their corporation to understand state law regarding child maltreatment.

Provision of Inservice Education to School Staff

Only 2 corporations (.7%) reported providing annual or regular inservice education to help school staff understand and identify child maltreatment cases, and 80 corporations (26%) reported providing such education on an irregular basis. The

majority of school corporations either indicated that they offered no inservice (121, 40%) or did not respond to the survey (101, 33%). Overall, most of Indiana's school staff seem to function without systematic, dependable inservice education to assist them in dealing with incidents of child maltreatment.

Procedures Followed when Child Maltreatment is Suspected

Suspected cases of maltreatment must be reported either orally or in writing to CPS. Fifty-one school corporations (17%) indicated that they provide written reports to CPS; 96 corporations (32%) provide only oral reports to CPS; 56 corporations (18%) said they had no specific procedure for formulating a report; and 101 (33%) did not respond.

In-school staff responsibilities and communication channels for reporting child maltreatment vary across corporations. In 158 corporations (52%), the identifying staff member is supposed to report to another school employee (usually the principal, but sometimes a nurse, counselor, or social worker), who then either reports to CPS or directs yet another specified school employee to do so. In 15 corporations (5%), the identifying staff member reports directly to CPS. Over two fifths of the corporations either indicated that they have no specific procedure for channeling reports (30, 10%), or did not respond (101, 33%).

Procedures vary for assuring identifying staff members that their cases have been reported to CPS. Of the 34 responding corporations (11%) that are fully accountable to the identifying staff member, 15 corporations (5%) have the staff member report directly to CPS, and 19 corporations (6%) provide written

confirmation that another staff member has made the report. Another 18 corporations (6%) rely on oral communication to assure the staff member that a report has been made. However, 151 school corporations (50%) reported no reliable procedure, and 101 (33%) did not respond.

Regarding the opportunities for CPS to conduct part of its investigation into child maltreatment cases in the school, a similar pattern emerges. Only 63 corporations (21%) affirmed the existence of policy provisions that specifically address investigations. Over three fourths of the school corporations either have not dealt formally with this issue (140, 46%) or did not respond (101, 33%).

Follow-up Procedures Applied in Working with Children or Families

Some school corporations indicated that they expect follow-up contact with the child, family, and/or CPS in one or more of the following ways. Twenty-four corporations (8%) work with the child and family, and 23 corporations (8%) work with the family and CPS. Twenty-two corporations (7%) consider informing the parents after a report is made, and 3 corporations (1%) indicated that the administration selects the procedure. However, 3 corporations specifically noted that follow-up contacts were not their responsibility. Overall, almost four fifths of the corporations either reported having no expectations for further assistance or contact with the child or family (140, 46%), or did not respond (101, 33%).

Though not asked specifically, some school corporations indicated that they follow up maltreatment cases with CPS in one

or more of the following ways. Thirty-two school corporations (11%) continue to communicate through a special liaison with CPS, 25 corporations (8%) communicate in writing, and 23 corporations (8%) communicate in some unspecified fashion. In 23 corporations (8%) administrators or special school personnel seek information. Finally, 12 corporations (4%) have meetings with CPS in regard to cases handled jointly.

Written Documentation of Case Handling

Written documentation of case handling by a school corporation may be kept by the schools and/or within the local CPS agency. As mentioned above, 51 corporations (17%) reported providing written reports to the local CPS agency. Those corporations keeping school records reported one or more of the following practices. Sixty-nine corporations (23%) stated that they maintain written documentation in an administrative confidential file, 46 corporations (15%) maintain documentation in a confidential file with restricted availability, and 5 corporations (2%) keep written documentation in the child's permanent folder (which may seriously jeopardize the family's rights to confidentiality). However, 91 corporations (30%) reported that they maintain no written records that would establish their accountability in dealing responsibly with child maltreatment cases, and 101 (33%) did not respond.

Prevention Measures

Though not asked specifically in the questionnaire, many responding school corporations indicated that they were involved in one or more programs intended to prevent child maltreatment.

Eighty-two corporations (27%) use school inservice education, 105 corporations (34%) maintain some type of relationship with CPS, and 13 corporations (4%) use community involvement programs.

Several corporations provided more specific information on the type of programs they use. For example, 10 corporations (3%) offer a curriculum on parenting, 2 corporations (.7%) offer counseling to parents, and 3 corporations (1%) offer a safety curriculum for students.

General Conclusions from the Indiana Study

School personnel and corporations have a legal duty to report suspected instances of child maltreatment. Also, school systems can offer assistance to children and families that experience maltreatment conditions. But this investigation of school corporations' existing practices for handling child maltreatment supports the following conclusions:

- Most of Indiana's school corporations have no accountable systems for identifying, reporting, correcting, or preventing cases of child maltreatment;
- Most of Indiana's school staff have not been and are not being adequately prepared to deal with child maltreatment issues;
- Systems for monitoring the maltreatment of school-age children and the manner in which school systems and staff deal with maltreatment are inadequate; and
- Only a minority of Indiana's school corporations appears to be dealing comprehensively or effectively with child maltreatment.

Section IV

CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPROVING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The state and local communities give schools broad responsibilities to promote the healthy development of children. Reflecting this point of view, the policy considerations presented in this section focus on preservice and inservice programs, school policies, school-community coordination, and state actions that could help in combatting child maltreatment.

Preparation of Educators

Preservice Education

By including a component on child maltreatment in preservice education, institutions of higher learning can expose future educators to the issues and problems associated with this topic. Particular attention can be given to: (a) national and state laws and regulations pertinent to the responsibilities of educators, (b) ethical standards of the profession concerning the handling of child maltreatment, (c) models for handling suspected and substantiated cases, (d) maltreatment within schools, and (e) the relationship between handicapping conditions and child maltreatment.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently recognized Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) as 1 of 10 universities in the nation to provide a comprehensive model for the preparation of specialist concentrations in child maltreatment (Tzeng, 1987). This program provides models and guides for the handling of child maltreatment cases by educators and schools. Guidance for preservice education

also has been provided by the National Education Association (Tower, 1984) and the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (Broadhurst, 1986).

Inservice Education

While preservice education can provide educators with a general background regarding child maltreatment, inservice programs enable them to understand and work with the specific conditions of local communities and schools. Inservice programs also convey the school corporation's commitment to combat maltreatment.

Inservice education is most effective if scheduled regularly, on an annual basis, and supported by written documents available on a continuing basis to staff. Supplementary training can be provided whenever an issue requiring special coverage arises, such as a change in the state law. Inservice education models have been designed to help schools develop their own programs (Broadhurst, 1978; McClare, 1983; Volpe, 1981). Some of these give specific attention to: (a) state laws and regulations (Crime Prevention Center, 1986; New York State Department of Education, 1985), (b) a specific type of maltreatment such as sexual abuse (Nelson & Clark, 1986), and (c) field tested programs (Broadhurst & Howard, 1975; Indiana Chapter for Prevention of Child Abuse, 1986). Additionally, models and guides recommended for preservice training can be useful in developing inservice education programs.

School Policies and Standards

Since Indiana law makes schools and educators responsible for reporting incidents of child maltreatment, it is essential that school corporations develop policies and procedures to assure accountability in such situations. According to the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, these policies should: (a) follow state law, (b) clarify procedures for the confidential reporting of suspected maltreatment and the notification of parents, (c) assure that a staff member trusted by the child is present to provide support when the child is interviewed, and (d) describe the administrative, civil, and criminal penalties for failure to report suspected maltreatment (Broadhurst, 1986). The most effective policies are written; closely monitored; widely disseminated to all school employees, students, parents, and members of relevant community agencies; and refined periodically by representatives of these groups. Information regarding model protocol and content for school system disposition is available from the Indiana Department of Public Welfare and relevant literature sources (Broadhurst, 1984; New York State Department of Education, 1985; Tower, 1984.)

Developing Standards for Prevention and Intervention

It is important that school corporations also develop standards for prevention, intervention, and correction of child maltreatment. For example, to address the special needs of maltreated children, schools might give each maltreatment victim an individual education plan (IEP), as they do for handicapped students (Brassard, 1987; Peterson & Roscoe, 1983).

Additionally, school corporations that want to fulfill the responsibilities of prevention, intervention, and correction could make a commitment to stay involved after reporting to help children and parents who are hurting (Broadhurst, 1986; Hart, Brassard, & Germain, 1987; New York State Department of Education, 1985; Tower, 1984).

In a recently released report on violence and public health, U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop suggested several general prescriptions for preventing child maltreatment. Schools could help by implementing the following measures: (a) abolish corporal punishment; (b) provide home visitor services, quality child care, and services that prevent undesirable pregnancies; (c) provide material on prevention of sexual abuse to all elementary school children; (d) offer programs on parenting and child development in elementary and secondary schools; and (e) expand services to runaway and homeless youth who are at high risk of being sexually abused (United States Public Health Service, 1987). Other guidelines for developing school policy and procedures are available from many perspectives, including those of national organizations (Broadhurst, 1986; Tower, 1984), state departments (Crime Prevention Center, 1986; New York State Department of Education, 1985), community programs (Broadhurst, 1975; McClare, 1983), and expert opinion (Hart, Brassard, & Germain, 1987).

School-Community Program Coordination

School corporations can amplify their effectiveness in dealing with child maltreatment by coordinating their efforts with

community child protective services. Specifically, schools can: (a) support and, if possible, provide facilities for community awareness, prevention, and corrections programs; (b) authorize the participation of school personnel on the local child protection team; (c) appoint someone to serve as liaison to CPS agencies; (d) develop a written protocol that details the relationships between schools and community agencies; and (e) cosponsor inservice education programs with community agencies.

Child Development Committees

A promising way to foster coordination between individual schools and community agencies is to establish a school-community child development committee to oversee programs that promote optimum development for all children. Subcommittees of a child development committee--including one on child maltreatment issues--could ensure that specific areas of development are addressed. The committee might include educators, child protective service workers, specialists in child and adolescent medicine and psychology, legal experts, parents, and youth. The present Indiana requirement (IC 31-6-11-14) that each county department of child welfare appoint and convene a "community child protection team" provides some support for this broader committee concept.

Establishing a committee that couches maltreatment issues within the broader context of child development and community action encourages: (a) more effective use of school and community resources, (b) increased community support and responsibility,

(c) renewed emphasis on education and prevention, and (d) reduced stigma for victims.

Program Leadership in Schools

Sensitive, coordinated, and effective handling of child maltreatment cases may be enhanced if specialists organize internal and external school programs. School corporations might consider employing a professional who has been trained to develop, sustain, and upgrade child maltreatment programs. This person could also serve as the school system's representative on community action and coordinating committees. The United States Department of Health and Human Services has encouraged school districts to prepare specialists for these leadership positions (Tzeng, 1987).

State Support

States can support effective school-community child maltreatment programs by: (a) framing well focused laws and regulations, (b) developing guidelines and models for policies and educational programs, and (c) providing educational and financial resources. To help schools reduce incidents of child maltreatment, policymakers might consider the following:

1. Develop policy guidelines for schools and communities to increase the degree to which state laws and regulations are applied consistently across communities (for examples see Crime Prevention Center, 1986; New York State Department of Education, 1985).

2. Encourage or require school corporations to have written policies and procedures on file with appropriate state agencies

(e.g., Department of Public Instruction, Department of Public Welfare, Child Protection Services Agency).

3. Encourage coordination of activities among state agencies (e.g., Department of Public Welfare, Department of Education, Office of the Attorney General, Indiana Chapter for Prevention of Child Abuse) to strengthen agency contributions, reduce duplication of efforts, and increase the use of available resources.

4. Increase school-community awareness about existing state programs that provide financial and technical support for development of policies and programs (e.g., "Educational Programs for At-Risk Students" conducted by the Indiana Department of Education).

5. Increase the level of state funds available to combat child maltreatment, and encourage state agencies that fund special programs (e.g., Family Violence and Victim Assistance Fund) to provide specific guidelines for school districts to help them develop comprehensive funding proposals.

6. Provide clear guidelines for preservice and inservice programs regarding child maltreatment issues.

Standardizing Data, Definitions, and Decision-Making Criteria

Another area of state policy development that is receiving considerable attention is the need to improve record-keeping practices on at-risk and maltreated youth. It is important to recognize that the nature of data and the method of data reporting have a significant influence on defining the problem, making

policies, establishing practices, and assessing the results of child maltreatment work.

For example, at present, analyzing data to determine accountability efforts in Indiana is limited by practices such as the following: (a) Reports from schools are combined with reports from other substitute caretakers; (b) reports are organized by age groups which obscure the effectiveness of school reporting (e.g., the 4-6 year old group cuts across nonschool, preschool, and early school stages); (c) reports of maltreatment in the schools are not broken down to identify the institutional position of the perpetrator (e.g., bus driver, fourth-grade teacher) or his/her relationship to the child (e.g., teacher, tutor); and (d) reports of psychological maltreatment, the type most likely to occur in and outside of school settings, are not included in the data (Indiana Department of Public Welfare, 1987).

The area of psychological maltreatment deserves particular attention. It has been targeted for special emphasis by the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (Baily & Baily, 1986; Brassard & Hart, 1987; Garbarino & Garbarino, 1987; Spider-Man, 1987) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Baily & Baily, 1986; Federal Register, 1985). Although Indiana has not yet established definitions and standards for handling cases of psychological maltreatment, sufficient information now exists for the state to develop standards to provide direction in dealing with this problem (Brassard, Germain, & Hart, 1987; Garbarino, Guttman, & Seeley, 1986). An overview of legislative perspectives on psychological maltreatment, which

identifies instructive developments in other states, has been provided by Corson and Davidson (1987).

Additionally, Indiana's Department of Public Welfare and Education can help schools deal with child neglect. According to Lynn Arthur, CPS consultant for the Indiana Public Welfare Department, it is particularly important for schools (a) to be sensitive to local community standards, (b) to expand neglect definitions to respect socio-cultural and educational conditions specific to minority populations, and (c) to maintain accurate records on child neglect over an extended period of time (personal communication, December 15, 1987). Such records can assist schools in determining the extent of the problem and in developing effective intervention and correction programs.

Finally, it would be helpful for educators to have more specific decision-making standards regarding the kinds of evidence that support a report of "reason to believe" that maltreatment exists. Some states (e.g., Illinois, California) require educators to sign a statement assuring that they understand the reporting laws of the state. Since greater familiarity with the details of the state law on the part of educators would be beneficial, Indiana lawmakers might consider establishing such a requirement and providing the written materials and training opportunities necessary to support it.

Problems and potentials associated with data standardization, definitions, and decision-making criteria are interrelated. They could be handled in a comprehensive and integrated fashion by a study/advisory council made up of representatives of state

agencies and organizations (e.g., Department of Public Welfare, Department of Education, Department of Health, Indiana Chapter for Prevention of Child Abuse). The legislature or the agencies themselves might consider establishing such a council to develop plans and recommendations.

Periodic Surveys of School Practices

School practices in combatting child maltreatment are of critical importance in assuring the welfare of Indiana's children. To improve school practices, a state agency or set of agencies (e.g., Department of Public Welfare, Department of Education) could conduct a survey of school policies and procedures and report findings on a regular basis. The survey procedure used to develop this paper might serve as a starting point, with subsequent surveys fashioned to take advantage of its strengths and avoid its weaknesses. A schedule of alternate year surveying and reporting of data, so that each school system is identified with its practices, could greatly serve the interests of accountability at state and local levels.

Conclusion

Child maltreatment is a serious problem that limits or destroys the lives of children--our most valuable resource. Schools, possibly to a greater degree than any other institution, have the potential to help combat child maltreatment. While some schools and educators are effectively dealing with this issue, research indicates that most are not.

Technical assistance is available from a variety of state and local agencies (e.g., Departments of Public Welfare and Education,

Child Protection Services) to help school corporations develop and expand maltreatment programs to meet local needs. Guidelines and models to develop programs can be obtained from (a) state agencies (e.g., Indiana Chapter for Prevention of Child Abuse), (b) national associations (e.g., Center for Child Abuse and Neglect, National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse) (c) institutions of higher education (e.g., the specialist program at IUPUI), and (d) authorities on child maltreatment (e.g., Broadhurst, 1984; Broadhurst & Howard, 1975; McClare, 1983; Tower, 1984). Funding is also available through the Family Violence and Victim Assistance Fund and monies allocated by the state to assist at-risk children.

To gain a clear picture of the problem of child maltreatment in Indiana, school corporations must begin to keep accurate records. They must also implement policies and procedures to inform school personnel about how to deal with child maltreatment. Through additional legislative support to reduce child maltreatment and through cooperative efforts between schools, communities, and state and local agencies, effective programs can be developed to assist Indiana's maltreated children.

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